

# District 24 Digital Digest

*"Life at Millburn 24"*



"Where the Wild Things Are" in Ms. Scheibe's second grade class

## Budget Crisis in Illinois

Did you know that the state of Illinois is in the middle of the largest state budget deficit in Illinois history? You may be wondering about the impact this has on school funding. Listed below are a very few brief points.

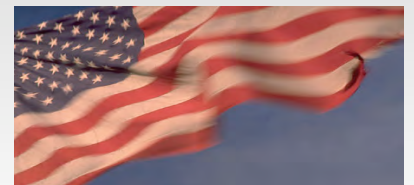
- Lack of state funding for money already promised in special education, transportation, and categorical payments will cause many districts to have to borrow money, deficit spend, and/or lay off teachers/employees.
- Illinois is about 120 days behind in paying the bills. That means we have to take money from other sources to pay ours.
- Illinois is using approximately \$1 billion in stimulus funding in 2009 and 2010 for general state aid purposes. In 2011, the state will have to come up with an additional \$1 billion just to maintain educational funding levels. Since 1992, 105 unfunded or underfunded education bills have become law. Specifically, in 2009, 74 education bills were passed. 19 were either unfunded or underfunded. Our local taxes are picking up the tab. Curious to see these? Click below to see the list of mandates since 1992.

[www.millburn24.net/files/filesystem/mandates.html](http://www.millburn24.net/files/filesystem/mandates.html)

- Illinois' over reliance on property tax revenue to fund schools has created a vast funding disparity between school districts.

## Board of Education

Shawn Lahr	<i>President</i>
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## Our Mission

In cooperation with our communities, District 24 is committed to efficiently preparing students to become productive, responsible members of a changing world by providing a nurturing environment that stimulates a voluntary desire to learn and education experiences that rigorously promote the realization of individual potential and excellence in achievement.

# Board Briefs

What has your Millburn Board of Education been doing for the last quarter? See below for some highlights:

- Had monthly financial discussions regarding class size, technology, special education, lunch program (more to come in later meetings)
- Did a facilities rental revision and had discussion regarding a cap on activity fees
- Received information on the new allergy guidelines now posted on our website
- Had Millburn Central and Millburn West principals present each school's School Improvement Plans
- Approved tax anticipation warrants not to exceed \$3.7 million dollars to be taken out \$500,000 at a time to save interest costs
- Did bidding on the snow removal and cut costs in half from last year
- Continued discussions regarding the house lease for the property and home the district owns next to Millburn Central
- Updated policies relating to school accountability, food services, free-reduced food services, facility management & expansion programs, parent organizations and booster clubs, board member development, environmental quality of buildings and grounds, pandemic preparedness, qualifications, term and duties of board officers, public participation at board meetings, school admissions to and student transfers to and from non-district schools, student fund-raising activities
- Heard ISAT updates about both schools and the district as a whole

If these sound like topics you would be interested in knowing about, please visit our website at <http://www.millburn24.net/schoolboard.cfm?subpage=76383>.

We have our meeting dates listed if you are interested in joining us.



### *Did you know....*

Public Act 96-0131 became effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. "This bill amends the Illinois Vehicle Code by prohibiting any driver, regardless of age, from using a wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle on a roadway in a **school speed zone** or using a wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle on a highway in a construction zone. Exceptions include using a phone in voice-activated mode, emergency use, and use by construction workers and law enforcement personnel.

### *Did you know....*

District 24 has a trade with a teacher living in the home that they own to do building checks in both buildings on the weekends. This saves the district \$22,464 per year.

### *Did you know....*

District 24 ran an H1N1 vaccination clinic in December and vaccinated 486 individuals.



# District 24 Financial Update

In December, our Board of Education reviewed the latest financial projections and discussed their impact upon programs, number of teachers, class sizes, and debt. The board is seeking your input on alternative courses of action.

During our current 2009-10 school year, we will have a balanced budget but continue to borrow \$3,700,000 in tax anticipation warrants each year.

Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, expenditures will exceed revenues by \$500,000 to \$800,000 per year, roughly 9 to 15 teachers. It is not possible to cut curriculum revisions, supplies, and “extras” because these items were eliminated in the last round of cuts. Financial Advisory Committee suggestions such as increased activity fees have already been put in place. To accommodate this shortfall, the Board must implement a combination of these approaches:

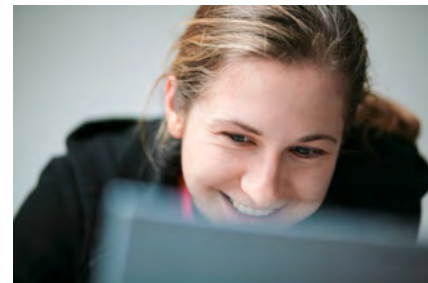
- Cutting programs
- Cutting personnel, thereby further increasing class sizes
- Borrowing more money, taking us further into debt each year
- Requesting additional taxes through a referendum

With the Financial Advisory Committee no longer active, we are directly seeking your input regarding which approaches to implement. You can review the budget as well as meeting agendas and approved minutes on our website at [www.millburn24.net](http://www.millburn24.net). You can voice your opinion by attending Board meetings and/or emailing the Superintendent and Board of Education members at [www.millburn24.net](http://www.millburn24.net). During the next few months, please help us choose the course of action that provides the best and most affordable educational opportunities for our children that we can afford.

*Written and edited by the Millburn Board of Education*

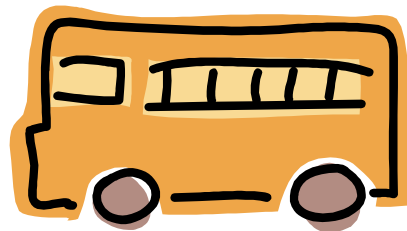
## Need advice about internet, cell phone, and online socializing for kids?

Below is a link to a booklet called Net Cetera-Chatting with Kids about Being Online. You will find helpful hints about talking to your child at a variety of ages about appropriate internet use. Go to the site and click on the words Net Cetera to read more.



We hope you find this site helpful.

<http://www.millburn24.net/Technology.cfm?subpage=45088>



## Transportation Update and School Hours Update for 2010-11

Please be aware that we are continually looking for additional ways to save dollars from other funds, such as the transportation fund, and get those savings into the educational fund to better serve the children. To that end, we are trying to combine smaller routes together and have busses make less stops. When this happens, money can be saved.

For the 2010-11 school year, we are anticipating the following changes:

- Bus routes may be longer, but not more than 45 minutes in length.
- There will be changes in bus stops. Your child may have to walk a bit further to get to a corner or cul-de-sac.
- Due to these changes, we will **most likely** be able to keep Millburn West's student hours the same at 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM.
- Due to these changes, we may be able to move to one start and stop time for Millburn Central School. Student hours may be 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM for ALL students attending Central. **At this point, this is tentative information only and not set in stone. We will update you further as we get more route information.**



Reading with puppets and Mrs. Hudson in the LRC



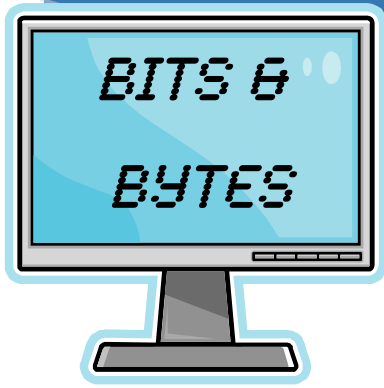
Mrs. Hessing's students go on a fun field trip!



Ms. Berg and her winning sixth grade basketball team

Mrs. Le Mieux's 4<sup>th</sup> graders and their Oobleck Experiment exploring states of matter





## FROM THE TECH TEAM

The major focus of Technology in Millburn District 24 is to aid in the promotion of the development of maximum potential in our students. We encourage teachers to encourage students to use technology tools, and we continue to offer scheduled classes to make sure the students are prepared to use these tools on their own. If you visit the Technology section of the district website, you will find a Scope and Sequence under the Important Documents link. This document is reviewed and updated each year as students enter each grade more advanced and prepared than the year prior. The information to follow is closely aligned to the scope and sequence by grade.

Our first grade students are learning how to format text in a text box, highlight text and changing the font, size and color. After that, they will begin learning to use the tools in KidPix to prepare for projects in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. These tools are common to many other software programs, but the learning is fun and interactive. In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, students are working on a multi-media project that they will eventually be taking home to share with their families. They are using KidPix to create a slideshow on the world that they live in. This project goes along with the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade social studies unit on community. They also learned about map keys and created their own key on a map of Illinois.

Third graders are working in PowerPoint creating an "All About Me" presentation. The students were introduced to PowerPoint for the first time a few weeks before break and are now working on their own project. 4<sup>th</sup> graders were introduced to PowerPoint in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but are getting a crash course on our upgraded 2008 version. The students will use PowerPoint to create a State Presentation using information they have gathered from a website called Culturegrams. They will first take notes from the website. They will then use a visual mapping program called Inspiration to map out their slides and then create their presentation.

Fifth grade students are learning the basics of Garageband and will soon be creating their own music. Garageband is a software application used to create music or podcasts. Students will export their song creations to iTunes and eventually make a CD they can take home and listen to. They are learning Garageband in order to be ready to create their podcasts in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Sixth grade students just finished up an introduction to iMovie by creating short slideshows with titles and transitions set to music. They will begin with a review of Garageband and then create their Radio Show Podcasts.

Seventh graders will start with Keynote, creating a project that includes a research piece. Then, they will put these events, along with

pictures that they have cited, into a presentation. They create an original Garageband song to include in their presentation. They will also be introduced to a Web 2.0 tools such as Voice Thread. Students will also learn to use a Wiki in 7th grade. Here the students will post their Excel projects, give and receive feedback and work on collaborative projects.

Eighth grade students will complete their memory pages for the Red and White Banquet and then begin working in groups on an iMovie project. This project will include script writing, storyboarding, video recording, and video editing.

Our district website continues to grow and develop. We hope parents are finding it easy to navigate and that it is constructed with useful information that makes the life of a Millburn parent a bit easier. We welcome suggestions. If there is something you would like to see that is not available, please use the home page contact link to communicate that idea. One particular page I would like to highlight is the I Would Like To . . . link on the home page under the Quick Links section. As we come across frequently requested information, we add that to this page. If there is something you would like to see added, please let us know. The concept there is to build a one-stop shop for most things parents need to know quickly.

Other points of interest might include information on Internet Safety for parents, which can be found on the Technology pages – Important Documents. Here you will find ideas for how to talk with your kids about being online, information on CyberBullying, and a parent resource center that deals with family safety online.

*Ms. Mitchell's second graders on classroom computers.*





Second Semester has begun, and it is hard to believe that we are already finished with the first half of the school year. I hope all of you have had a peaceful Winter Break, and that your new year has begun well. January, for district staff, starts with all of us looking at our goals for the school year and seeing what remains to be accomplished. Teachers have been working very hard throughout the first semester to make sure that the students receive the academic instruction that fits their needs. They are certainly continuing this effort, and several federal and state mandates are informing how these needs are to be met. One of these mandates (or initiatives) is Response to Intervention or RtI.

“RtI is the general education initiative which requires all district staff to work together to provide a quality educational experience for all students.” (The Illinois State Response to Intervention [RtI] Plan, January 1, 2008) Because children learn in different ways and at different speeds, Millburn District offers multiple resources that help students to grow and improve in their skills and learning. Besides the core curriculum that is researched based, we have available supplementary programs in math, reading and writing that help students practice skills and review key concepts. Some of these programs are technology based; some of them are not. All of these programs are tailored to meet specific needs of the student that have been identified by testing, observation, and student responses as needing extra support to perform at grade level.

When you visit the District Website ([www.millburn24.net](http://www.millburn24.net)), please click on the blue Curriculum tab. There, I have provided a brief overview of several items. One of these items is the curriculum along with specific information about the textbooks and materials used in the regular classroom. Another link will take you to a site that has brochures that briefly describe each grade-level’s curriculum. There is also a link to information about the district assessments and dates. Recently, I added information about some of the technological resources that are available to the students. Some of these resources can only be accessed in the classroom; however, some of these resources can be used at home as well. A few resources are only available to students who require additional help in a small group environment with a teacher.

## Great opportunity!



### Dates to Remember: District Assessments

March 2-12  
ISAT Testing  
Grades 3-8

April 7-20  
MAP (Spring) Testing  
Grades 2-8

May 3-14 –  
AIMSweb (Spring)  
Benchmarking  
Grades K-8

Some parents and community members have expressed an interest in learning more about the technology interventions that are available to the students. On February 18, 2010 we are offering the first of several opportunities to experience one of these programs. At 6:30 I will be hosting an hour information and activity session on Reading Plus - a technology program for which we received a three-year grant. **This program can even be used with adults who wish to improve their speed and comprehension to help them in their jobs and other activities.** This program is used with regular students in grades 4-8 who need to increase their reading speed, vocabulary, and/or comprehension to reach grade-level expectations. It is provided in a pull-out situation because of the high-level of concentration needed to use the program. In addition, Reading Plus is one of the programs that is browser-based and, thus, can be used at home. Look for a sign-up sheet to participate in this opportunity in the principals’ weekly newsletters at the end of January. In the meantime, if you would like to learn more about this reading program, you can visit the website at [www.readingplus.com](http://www.readingplus.com).

If you have any questions about these programs or about anything concerning curriculum or assessment, please contact me at 847-356-8331, Ext. 2898. I would be happy to help you in any way I can.

Millburn School District offers screenings for preschoolers with *suspected developmental delays*. Developmental areas evaluated include speech and language, small and large motor skills, and pre-academic skills. The next screening will be held on the morning of Wednesday February 17, 2010 BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. This is available to district three and four year olds. The screenings take about an hour.

The final screening date for the year will be Wednesday March 17, 2010. If you would like to schedule an appointment, call 847-356-8331. x2908.



**MRS. SOOLEY'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASS  
HAS SOME WINTER FUN TIME!**

## ***RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION***

By the fall of 2010, the state of Illinois has mandated that school districts must use a Response to Intervention (RTI) model to identify students who are academically at-risk. We will be updating parents and the community on Millburn's RTI plan in the coming weeks and months. Check our website for information and important links.

*Response to intervention* integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities. (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2008).

RTI relies on a 3-tiered system of support:

**Tier 1** is the foundation and consists of scientific, research-based core instructional and behavioral methodologies, practices and supports designed for *all students in the general curriculum*.

**At Tier 2**, supplemental instruction and interventions are provided *in addition to core instruction* to those students for whom data suggest additional instructional support is warranted.

**Tier 3** consists of *intensive* instructional interventions provided *in addition to core instruction* with the goal of increasing an individual student's rate of progress.

Please go to this link to get an overview of RTI:

<http://www.millburn24.net/files/filesystem/What%20is%20RTI.pdf>





# Principals' Principles

Dear Millburn Parents and Community,

We would like to take this opportunity to share a little bit about how teachers get the opportunity for professional growth throughout the school year. Students frequently ask, and sometimes parents as well, “What does in-service mean?” “What do you do on early dismissals?” We would be happy to shed some light on this process.

We will start by noting all the pathways educators have for professional growth, and then address each of the in-service periods with more specificity. Educators increase their professional knowledge by attending in-service days within the district, workshops outside the district, or college courses offered by various universities. All members of the staff, including teachers, administrators, bus drivers, custodians, teacher assistants, and administrative assistants require training from time to time. Yearly training hours are required to maintain a bus license, teaching certificate, or even a water management certificate. However, we will focus on the educational aspect for the purposes of this newsletter.

Educators at Millburn may increase their professional knowledge during in-service days that are offered throughout the school year. We had two full days of in-service before school started, one day in October, a half-day in January and another full day in April. In-service days lend us opportunities to focus on a specific area for staff development related to general goals of the district. For example, we used a portion of October’s in-service day to analyze the data gathered on student progress so we could set instructional goals for the school year. We also used a portion of this day to generate a discussion about how we are using homework, and how we view our current grading processes. We were fortunate enough to hire (with grant money) outside consultants to assist us in both of these areas. We were able to increase our collective knowledge and understanding by having the October institute day.

Educators at Millburn also have the opportunity to attend workshops that are offered throughout the state, or even across the country. There are many workshop providers that offer training on a specific subject for a day or two. Each certified staff member is given a small allowance that they may choose to use to attend these workshops throughout the school year. The principals at each building approve the workshops and they are related to a specific aspect of a teacher’s position. For example, several teachers have attended workshops on how to improve the reading performance of struggling readers. Workshops outside the district help teachers gain knowledge in a specific area of their profession.

Finally, educators at Millburn can increase their knowledge of sound instructional practices through college coursework. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to continue lifelong learning through provisions in the teachers’ contract. Teachers are able to receive some tuition reimbursement for successful completion of graduate classes, and they are also able to increase their salary as they accumulate graduate credit. Many of our teachers have completed coursework for a master’s degree, or they are currently in the process of completing their degree.

In addition to offering opportunities for staff development, our in-service days and early dismissals allow us opportunities to communicate within each building and across the district. The primary purpose for the early dismissals on Wednesdays has been articulation amongst grade levels or departments. For example, one Wednesday would be assigned for 1<sup>st</sup> grade to articulate with 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 3<sup>rd</sup> with 4<sup>th</sup> and so on. The next Wednesday would be assigned for articulation with Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> with 3<sup>rd</sup>, and so forth. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday would be assigned for articulation within each grade, but across both schools in the district.

The subject matter for articulation may vary, but it is generally designed to discuss the implementation of curriculum, so that we may deliver the district curriculum in an efficient manner. One example has been the discussion about the social studies curriculum. We would not want each grade level to focus on early American history but never touch on the history of the ancient civilizations. Articulation helps us keep our curriculum progression intact.

Other necessary communication issues addressed on early dismissals and in-service days include the requirements of workplace safety, review of the emergency plan, and the review of the organizational goals.

The process for organizing each of these opportunities involves the coordinated efforts of all members of our administrative team. This includes: Dr. Ellen Mauer, our superintendent; Joanne Rathunde, our director of technology; Dr. Cheryl Kucera, our director of curriculum; and Elizabeth Keefe, our director of special services; and ourselves.

We hope that this has been a worthy topic to address with this communication. We want you to know that staff development is a vital activity in providing our children with an excellent education.

Jason Lind, Principal, Millburn Central  
[jlind@millburn24.net](mailto:jlind@millburn24.net)  
847-245-2800

Jake Jorgenson, Principal, Millburn West  
[jjorgenson@millburn24.net](mailto:jjorgenson@millburn24.net)  
847-245-1616